

## THE USES OF 'LIKE'

### 1. Uwagi ogólne

Tekst *The uses of 'like'* adresowany jest do studentów kierunków filologicznych i humanistycznych zainteresowanych zmianami zachodzącymi we współczesnym języku angielskim.

### 2. Poziom zaawansowania: B2/B2+

### 3. Czas trwania opisanych ćwiczeń: 15–25 minut (z dyskusją)

### 4. Cele dydaktyczne

Celem przygotowanych ćwiczeń jest zapoznanie studentów z możliwymi zastosowaniami słowa 'like' we współczesnym języku mówionym oraz wprowadzenie do dyskusji na temat „popularności” niektórych wyrażen i związanych z tym emocji.

### 5. Uwagi i sugestie

Ćwiczenia najlepiej jest wykonywać w parach, a następnie sprawdzić na forum grupy. Dyskusję można rozwinąć o inne elementy – można zebrać od studentów przykłady różnych, obecnie popularnych wyrażen z języka mówionego i na przykład pogrupować je według częstotliwości użycia (porównując częstotliwość ich użycia w internecie).

## THE USES OF 'LIKE'

1. Translate the following sentences from teenager talk into general English.

“So we were all, (1) like, hanging out. And then this guy comes over and starts, (2) like, hassling us. Then he’s all (3) like, ‘Get outta here!’ And we were all, (4) like, ‘This is public property.’”

1. Is the meaning of ‘like’ the same in all sentences?
2. Which meanings of ‘like’ in the story above are similar?

2. What people think about ‘like’? (Would you agree?)

1. it’s only used in teenagers’ speech
2. it’s fairly recent, dates back to the 1980s
3. it’s a filler, a verbal tic like ‘um’ and ‘you know’
4. it’s being used mindlessly
5. ‘like’ always implies comparison
6. ‘like’ implies that words cannot fully convey an event or idea
7. ‘like’ can be used to make a request or suggestion more subtle
8. ‘like’ can express disbelief
9. ‘like’ is used to introduce quotations, as an exact synonym for ‘said’
10. ‘like’ gives an approximation of the speaker’s tone of voice or behaviour

3. Now read the text below and check answers to questions in exercise 2. Mark the sentences True or False.

### Ok, Let’s, Like, Appreciate Like

*by Rob Kyff*

“So we were all, like, hanging out. And then this guy comes over and starts, like, hassling us. Then he’s all like, ‘Get outta here!’ And we were all, like, ‘This is public property.’”

People write to me all the time to complain about teenagers’ talking like this. “Why does every other word have to be ‘like’?” they ask. “It’s a filler,” they write, “a verbal tic like ‘um’ and ‘you know.’ It’s monotonous and mindless.”

Monotonous it may be, but it’s hardly mindless. In fact, teenagers use ‘like’ to impart subtle nuances and convey the emotional essence of events.

As linguist Geoffrey Nunberg points out in his fascinating book “Going Nuclear” (Public Affairs, \$18.95), peppering sentences with ‘like’ emerged in the slang of jazz musicians and beatniks during the 1950s. The word ‘like,’ he writes, “didn’t actually mean anything so much as it evoked, the way a jazz riff does.”

Because ‘like’ implies comparison, it distances speakers from their words, reflecting casualness and even a mistrust of words’ ability to fully convey an event or idea. Phrases

such as “we were all, like, hanging out” and “starts, like, hassling us” suggest that “hanging out” and “hassling us” don’t fully capture the events described, but provide the general idea.

Similarly, Nunberg observes, ‘like’ can be used to finesse a request (“Could I, like, stay at your place?”); express disbelief (“So you’re, like, firing me?”); and soft-pedal a suggestion. (“We should consider, like, moving.”)

During the 1980s, teenagers started using ‘like’ in a new way: to introduce quotations, as an apparent synonym for ‘said,’ as in, “We were all, like, ‘This is public property.’”

But here’s the catch: ‘Like’ doesn’t really mean ‘said.’ For when teenagers say, “He was all, like, ‘Get outta here!’” they don’t necessarily mean those were the speaker’s exact words. They mean that what follows is an approximation of the tone of what he said. In fact, he may not have said anything but simply grunted and chased them away.

In this context, ‘like’ is being used to introduce a brief imitation of the person’s behavior. That’s why the words following ‘like’ are often accompanied by a physical gesture such as waving arms or a clenched fist.

But will all these fancy explanations stop adults from waving their arms and clenching their fists when they hear teenagers sprinkle their sentences with ‘like’? I wouldn’t, like, count on it.

Source: *Ok, Let’s, Like, Appreciate Like*, [http://articles.courant.com/2008-01-04/features/0801030330\\_1\\_words-hanging-hassling](http://articles.courant.com/2008-01-04/features/0801030330_1_words-hanging-hassling), access: 7 March, 2016.

#### 4. One more use of ‘like’.

Weather forecasters and journalists often attach ‘-like’ to the ends of words, as in “fall-like temperatures” and “flu-like symptoms.”

1. In your opinion, is adding ‘-like’ in the quotations above:

- a) grammatically wrong,
- b) unnecessary,
- c) justified?

2. Read the text below to find out how Rob Kyff answers question 1.

### **These Terms are Cliche-like**

*By Rob Kyff*

I don’t like ‘like.’ And, no, this time I’m not, like, railing against the, like, overuse of ‘like’ by teenagers.

Today, my targets are the weather forecasters and journalists who habitually append ‘-like’ to the ends of words, as in “fall-like temperatures” and “flu-like symptoms.”

Yes, I realize that autumn temperatures may occur in summer and that diseases that aren’t the flu may share its symptoms. But why not simply say “fall temperatures” and “flu symptoms”?

Source: <http://www.briscar.com/featurepages/wordguy.htm>, access: 7 March, 2016.

5. In pairs, answer the following questions.

1. Are there any expressions or words in your language that are currently 'popular'? Who are they used by?
2. Why do you think certain expressions or words become popular?
3. Do you think that some expressions or words widely used in everyday speech can be annoying?
4. Why do some people feel strongly annoyed by a certain type of language (e.g. teenager talk, professional jargon, etc.)?

## KEY

1. SS' own suggestions of translation, 1 – no, 2 – similar meanings: 1 and 2; 3 and 4
2. SS' own opinions
3. 1F, 2F, 3T, 4F, 5F, 6T, 7T, 8T, 9F, 10T
4. 1 – SS' own opinions, 2 – b
5. SS' own ideas